

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Keith, Charles S. Residence
other names/site number Nichols, J.C., House

2. Location

street & number 1214 W. 55th Street [n/a] not for publication
city or town Kansas City [n/a] vicinity
state Missouri code MO county Jackson code 095 zip code 64112

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
[x] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties
in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR
Part 60. In my opinion, the property [x] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this
property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [x] locally. (See continuation sheet for additional
comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title Claire F. Blackwell/Deputy SHPO

Date

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date

[] entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet [].

[] determined eligible for the National
Register

See continuation sheet [].

[] determined not eligible for the National
Register.

[] removed from the National Register

[] other, explain see continuation sheet [].

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-state
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property

☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

contributing

noncontributing

2	0	building
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
3	0	total

Name of related multiple property listing.

N/A

Number of contributing resources
previously listed in the National Register.

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Function

DOMESTIC: Single dwelling

Current Functions

VACANT/NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY

REVIVALS: Georgian Revival

Materials

foundation brick

walls brick

stone

roof terra cotta

other concrete

see continuation sheet [].

see continuation sheet [].

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet [x]

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

- ☐ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

ARCHITECTURE

Periods of Significance

1914

Significant Dates

1914

Significant Person(s)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Shepard, Farrar & Wiser, architects
Hare and Hare, landscape architects

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record
- # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State Agency
- ☐ Federal Agency
- ☒ Local Government
- ☒ University
- ☒ Other:

Name of repository: Kansas City Public Library

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Three acres

UTM References

A. Zone Easting Northing
15 361030 4321230

B. Zone Easting Northing

C. Zone Easting Northing

D. Zone Easting Northing

[] See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cydney E. Millstein, architectural historian

organization Architectural and Historical Research, L.L.C. date August 31, 1999

street & number P.O. Box 22551 telephone 816/363-0567

city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64113

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Ronald and Casey LeMay

street & number 1025 W. 54th Street telephone 816/523-4387

city or town Kansas City state Missouri zip code 64112

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SUMMARY

The Charles S. Keith Residence, located at 1214 W. 55th Street, was designed by the Kansas City architectural firm of Shepard, Farrar & Wiser in 1913 and completed in 1914. The 2 1/2 story Flemish-bond brick, cut-stone and concrete Georgian Revival home is sited on a regular three-acre sloping tract fronting 350 feet on W. 55th Street and stretching 405 feet to the north. Two additional contributing elements include a one and one-half story, brick garage, located to the northeast of the residence, and historic landscaping. The home is set back 200 feet from the street and a high, coursed limestone retaining wall marks the property's southern boundary. Hare and Hare, the nationally prominent Kansas City landscape architecture firm, was responsible for the design of the grounds in 1913. Costing \$75,000 to erect, the Keith Residence measures 141 feet by 90 feet and is situated within one of Kansas City's most prestigious, planned residential neighborhoods developed by J.C. Nichols. In good condition, the Keith Residence has retained the majority of its historic features to convey its significance. Its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association has been retained.

ELABORATION*Exterior*

In general, the Keith Residence is characterized by a formal, symmetrical arrangement of traditional Georgian elements at the main block embellished by less conventional forms and detailing. The residence essentially employs a modified "U" shape appearance featuring a wide curved stone terrace with brick piers and cut-stone balustrade framing the south or main façade, and terrazzo-floored projecting porticos (each measuring 16 feet by 51 feet) at the east and west façades. A sloping, coursed limestone wall with cut-stone

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coping begins at the western half of the main or south terrace and extends along an additional terrace at the far west end. A wide porte cochere flanks the eastern portico. Multiple paired brick interior and exterior chimneys with stone caps, in addition to a green glazed tile hipped roof with wide eaves, further define the main block. Original coupled pendentive bracketing at the cornice is no longer extant.

Main or south façade; main block

The main entrance faces south. A centrally placed entry features a multipaned wood door and fixed transom set in a cut-stone, segmental arched surround. Large, carved voluted brackets support a wide, arched wooden canopy sheathed in tin. Fenestration at the first story is recessed, six-over-six, double-hung, sash with prominent stone segmental arch surrounds with wide lug sills and modest brackets. Units at the west bays are ribboned; narrow two-over-two, double-hung sash windows flank the central unit. Operable tripartite transoms crown the windows at the western bays, while blind transoms are placed above the units of the eastern bays. The second-story fenestration, echoing the design and configuration of the first story units, is six-over one, double-hung, sash with wide cut-stone lintels, pronounced keystones and lug sills. Molded, segmental arched dormers with single-hung, three-over-one windows pierce the roofline. Deep, three-quarter height window wells with wrought-iron railing are set below the first story fenestration.

North façade; main block

The traditional massing of the main façade is broken at the rear façade by multiple, projecting bays that define interior spaces. An amalgam of fenestration, featuring cut-stone embellishments, includes: six-over-one, double-hung sash set in deep surrounds (first story, central bays); six-over-one and three-over-one double-hung

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sash with prominent lintels, pronounced keystones and lug sills (all levels); eight-over-one, segmental arched with deep surround and keystone (top story); multipaned casement units (balcony level); a tripartite double-hung leaded art glass unit with transoms (stair landing level); and a pair of fixed, leaded glass units (first story). Secondary entrances feature a multipaned and paneled wood door (at the east bay) and a multipaned unit with segmental arched transom and an adjacent, modest two-over-one single-hung sash window, leading to the original maid's quarters.

East and west facades; main block

Fenestration of the east and west facades, often paired or ribboned, is generally six-over-one, double-hung, sash with wide cut-stone lintels, pronounced keystones and lug sills. Two pairs of recessed multipaned French doors and a multipaned wood door, all set in stone surrounds, are located at the east façade. Similarly styled French doors with operable transoms, flanking a wide, eight-over-eight, double-hung, sash window, are located at the south bays of the west façade. An additional multipaned and paneled basement entrance is featured at the west façade. Wide, pedimented dormers with multipaned sash windows and prominent returns mark the east and west façades.

Porticos and Port Cochere

Porticos are situated at both the east and west end bays of the residence; the western unit was originally designed as a pergola. At an undetermined time, the curved, Craftsman Style trellised roof of the pergola was overlaid and rolled with asphalt. Similarly defined, the east portico features a wide tin-sheathed, molded wooden cornice with multiple modillions, while the west portico is characterized by cast concrete beams with exposed rafter tails. Multiple concrete columns (often paired) with Doric-styled capitals, separated by brick piers with decorative stone panels, and

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polychromatic terrazzo floors further define both porticos. A shed roofed brick and stone porte cochere with cut-stone segmental arched bays and stone voussoirs at the north and south façades and paired concrete columns at the east and west façades, echoes the design of the porticos. A series of stone stairs leads from the porte cochere to the portico and vestibule.

Interior

The original interior spaces and much of the original finishes of the Keith Residence is intact and in good condition. A contemporary article from The Kansas City Star, described the interior as follows:

The house has twenty-two rooms, exclusive of linen and bathrooms. There are six complete bathrooms with built-in showers and electric cabinets. The first floor will be finished in mahogany, walnut and quartered oak. The house may be characterized as devoid of sham. Perhaps this is best illustrated by the Roman palm room. The walls here are to be constructed of carved stone slabs instead of the customary 3/4" cae[n] stone.¹ The palm room will open both on the terrace and into the pergola . . . The library is in the Elizabethan style, with bookcases reaching from floor to ceiling. The living room will be Georgian and will be in white enamel. The dining room will be Jacobean.²

The center-hall plan at the first floor includes a large foyer set in between the Palm Room to the west and the formal living room to the east. The living room features a richly ornamented crown molding with acanthus modillions. The dining room displays a geometric-patterned ribbed ceiling, foliated crown molding and

¹ Caen stone is yellowish limestone quarried in Caen, France.

² "C.S. Keith's New Home," *The Kansas City Star*, November 2, 1913, n.p.

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walnut paneling. The library is paneled in mahogany. All rooms contain fireplaces. Original historic features of the service areas, including kitchen, maid's room, butlery and pantry, are no longer extant. The original oak stairway at the north side of the main hall and the rear servants' stair are extant.

Four bedrooms are located at the second floor; plaster walls and a decorative crown molding characterize each room. Each room features a fireplace. The third floor contains six rooms, modestly ornamented.

Garage

Located to the east of the residence is a four bay brick, cut-stone and wood garage with a hipped, glazed green tile roof and segmental arched cross dormers. Originally designed to accommodate two horses and a cow, as well as three "motor cars" and a caretaker, the highly detailed one and one-half story building features four, segmental arched multipaned and paneled wood garage double-doors and two entrances with paneled and multipaned doors at the west façade. The north façade features a paneled and glazed double-door, a six-over-one, double-hung, sash window with stone lug sill and a duplicate entry door. All door and window units feature wide flat arches with pronounced keystones. Dormers at the west and south façades are tripartite; the west unit displays paired, casement windows flanked by single-hung, three-over-one windows. Casement windows flank a central single-hung unit at the south-facing dormer. The north-facing unit displays a single-hung, three-over-one window.

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Landscape

General Comments Regarding Historic Significance

Presently, the grounds of the Keith Residence still display much of the original Hare and Hare landscape plan elements, although the originality of plant materials has changed. Consequently, because the stable elements, appearance and function of the landscape are sufficiently intact to represent the original design intent, and the existing vegetation re-enforces the original plan, the historic landscape has retained enough of its integrity to convey its historic character and therefore, its significance. National Register Bulletin 18 states:

The absence of original vegetation may not diminish integrity, for example, if the same or similar species of appropriate size have been replanted to replace dead, diseased or mature specimens.³

Many of the stable features of Hare and Hare's 1913 design for the Keith home, including overall grading, stone walls and entry markers, formal garden, and driveways have been maintained. For example, the original character of the forested southwest lawn is still intact and the vista has been maintained; however the majority of the hardwoods, including ash, oak and elm trees, have been replaced with appropriate plantings, i.e. maple and oak. (see below).

Front Lawn

The original plan for the front lawn indicates a large shrub border around the stone fence that consisted of buckthorn, viburnums and

³ J. Timothy Keller and Genevieve P. Keller, "How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes," *National Register Bulletin 18* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1994), 7.

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mockorange. A smaller shrub border of snowberry, barberry and hydrangea was situated toward the interior of the lawn. The overstory large shade trees included walnuts, ash, oak, and elm trees in the inner yard. The plan also indicates a shrub border of lilacs along the east side of the entry drive and spirea to the west as you approach the residence. This focused the view to the main lawn, then obstructed the view as one moved closer to the house and garage. The garage area was screened in the original plan.

The current landscape in the front lawn consists of small understory trees of dogwood, red bud and river birch, which are newly planted, and a large overstory canopy of maple and oak (c. 1950). Some of the original walnut trees still exist and appear to be in good condition. The large and small shrub borders along the fence are extinct, but are being replicated with planting of rhododendron and azaleas. The front lawn also contains a small drainage pond, which was placed to hold water from the downspouts of the roof. It appears that this was added at a later date (c. 1920) when more naturally shaped water gardens became the rave in the Kansas City area. The drainage pipes running to it are in poor condition and the pond is not currently holding water. The entry drive plantings to the east and west do not exist nor does the walkway leading to the front court terrace. The walnut tree located toward the north end was struck by lightning within the past twenty years although appears to be in good condition.

Service Area

The original plan for the service area is located directly at the end of the entry drive and includes the garage, walled paddock, walled vegetable garden (possibly the original laundry yard). There are large-scale shrubs and small-scale trees for lower screening, as well

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as, large shade trees around this area with a narrow strip of grass along the edge of the driveway.

Currently, these plantings no longer exist, and as a result you can look directly at the service area and port cochere as you approach the residence. Most of the overstory shade trees, smaller trees and shrubs are in very good condition but do not appear to be those from the original plan. There are no walled areas that define separate vegetable and paddock areas.

Back Yard

The original plan for the back yard was similar to the front lawn as it was bordered by small to large-scale shrubs, such as rose of sharon and tatarian honeysuckle. These plantings ran along the property line and wrapped around to screen the service area on the west, and back along the rear of the house, thus creating two distinct areas: the back lawn and maid/butler access walkway. This maid/butler walkway was enclosed with tall shrubs on the right, and only small plantings such as ferns and Columbines along the foundation. This narrow area was used for deliveries and other service related functions as it was screened from the lawn in back. This area was not visible from the dining room and library. The only access to this area is from the kitchen, basement or turn in area of the driveway. The second area is the large sweep of back lawn completely enclosed by the aforementioned flowering shrubs. Large shade trees break up the sweep of lawn.

Currently, there is no shrub border that separates the two spaces. A newly planted evergreen hedge of columnar white pine and upright junipers has been planted along the north edge of the property and seems to be in fair condition. The larger shade trees of maple and oak have been added c. 1950. The existing walnut, in poor condition

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due to a lightning strike, appears to be from the original plan. The large oak located to the west end of the back lawn appears to be in a different location than the existing one called out on the plan. However, this tree could be the off-spring of the original oak.

Formal Garden

In the original plan the formal garden is located along the west property line toward the north and is enclosed by shrub beds and hedges of exotic plant material. It contained specimens such as common privet, Golden Poplar, Snowdrop Tree (Carolina Silverbell Tree today), and *Catalpa bungei* (a dwarf form of *Catalpa* known to exist today only at the Arnold Arboretum in Boston). These unusual specimens, combined with the flowerbeds in this area made for quite a display of yellow and purple flowers. There was an axis running north and south aligning the shelter and the pergola. There are two cross axis running east and west. One at the sundial that crosses the sight line from the back lawn, while the other is at the lily pool. This area, typical of its time, was set up to enable the visitor to sit in the shade at either end and enjoy the plants in a sunny surrounding.

Currently, the configuration of the formal garden is somewhat consistent to the original plan, however, most of the original plants are no longer extant. Some of the larger shrubs are in good condition but overall the shrubs, perennials and hedges of arborvitae are in poor condition. It still has its main axis running north and south with the existing shelter at the north end. The pergola once located to the south of the pool is no longer extant, however, there is evidence that it was constructed. The pond appears to have been renovated and somewhat modified from the original plan.

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Two pieces of statuary, which appear to be original, are located at either side of the pergola at the north end of the garden. Both pieces are of women, in dress from the early 1910s, gathering flowers or fruit in baskets held on their hips. These are not typical of pieces made within the last 50 years or so and would, therefore, probably date back to the original landscape. The other piece of statuary still in the garden is a small fountain and sundial which do not appear to be part of the original landscape.

Grass Terrace and Front Terrace

The original plan indicates a small grass terrace with stepping-stones to the west bound by a pergola on the east. The foundation along the grass terrace was a tall shrub border of althaeas, spirea and deutzia. Past the pergola was the front terrace, which was enclosed by the porch on the east. The front court was planted with phlox next to the building and barberry and annuals along the balustrade. The walkway from the entry drive had two shrub beds of spirea and urns filled with annuals flanking the steps to the front terrace.

Currently, the front terrace is not planted with shrubs or perennials, although it contains turf from the porch on the east to the pergola on the west. The grass terrace has an added small shrub hedge at the west end, which overlooks the formal garden. This terrace has a small fountain that has been added since the original plan. Planting in front of the terrace walls does not exist today. The walkway from the street to the front of the house, as well as, the walk through the forecourt no longer exists. The urns, which sat on the balustrade at either side of the entry steps, are also missing.

Overall Condition and Comments

The overall condition of the property is generally good. The trees on the property have had corrective work done recently and appear to

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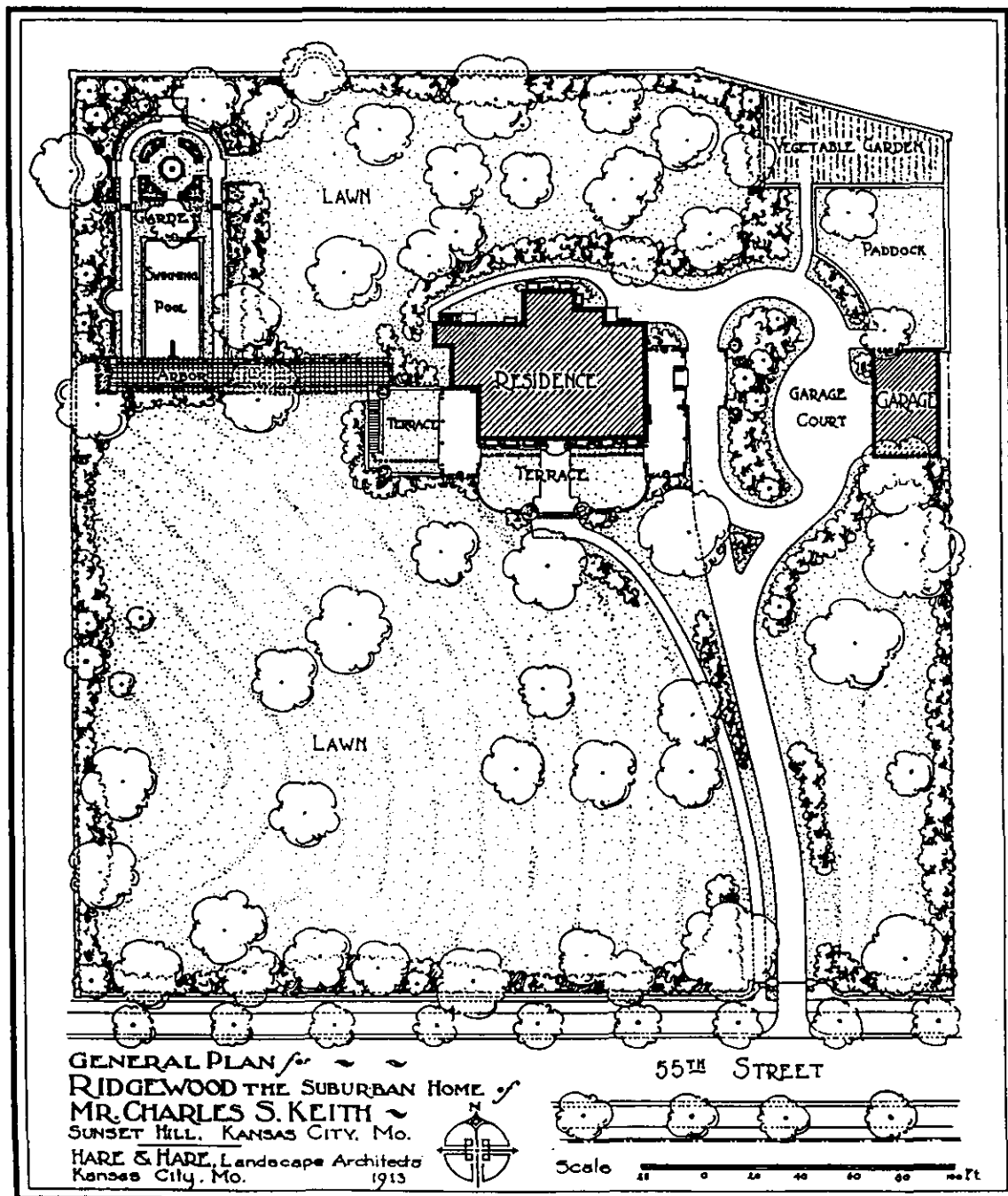
be in fairly good condition. Although most of the small-scale shrubs including the hedges in the formal garden are in poor condition, the majority of the shrubs originally planted have modern equivalents. Many of these varieties were "parents" or "half of the cross" used to create the hybrid shrubs we know today. It is important to note that the overstory shade trees coupled with the formal garden are very reminiscent of the character of the original Hare and Hare plan.⁴

⁴ The landscape description of the Keith home grounds was prepared by Steve Rhoades with Patti Banks and Associates, Kansas City, Missouri, August 24, 1999.

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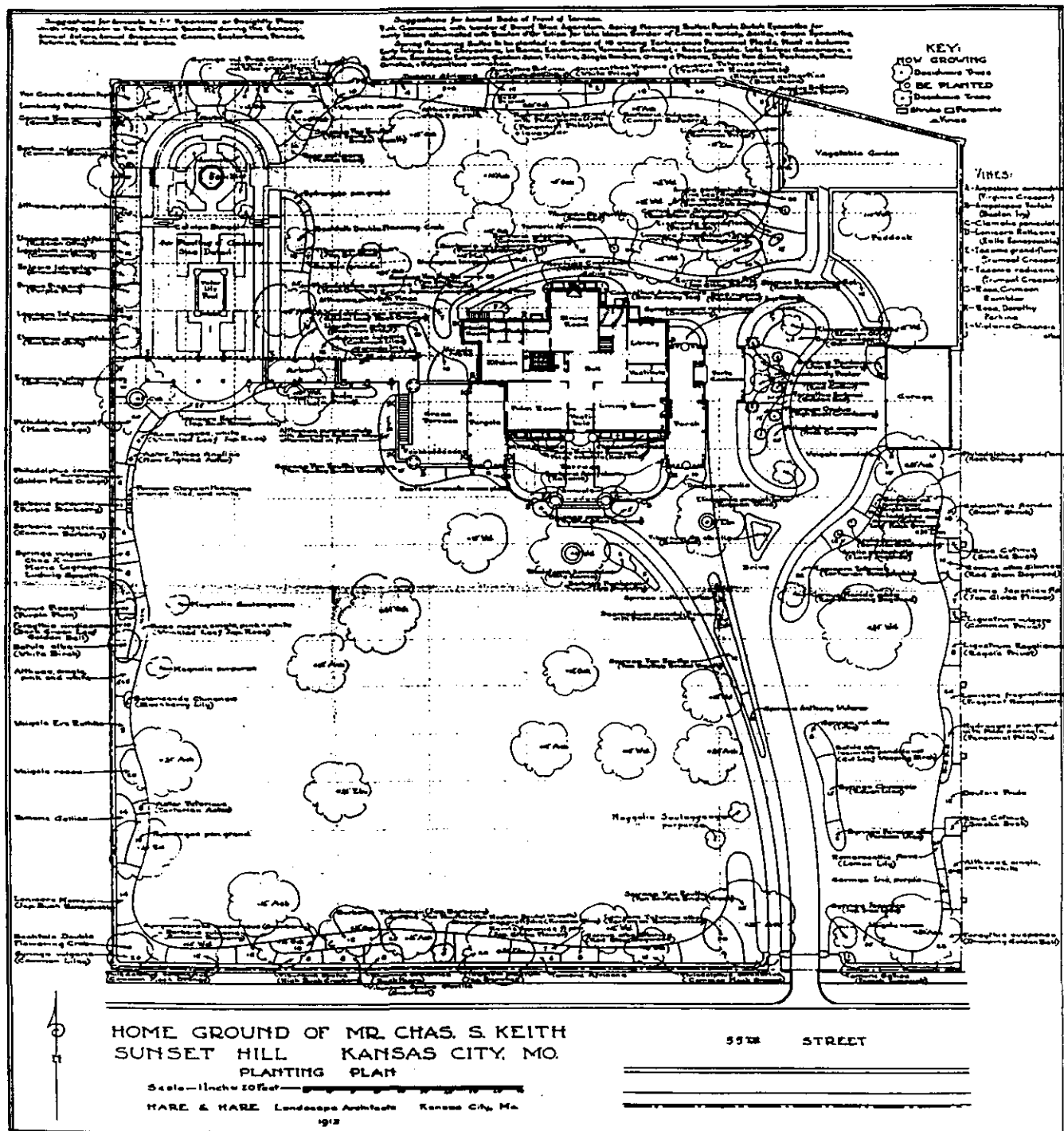


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SUMMARY

The Charles S. Keith residence, 1214 W. 55th Street, Kansas City, Missouri, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C and is locally significant in the following areas: ARCHITECTURE:

Designed in 1913 and constructed in 1914, the Charles S. Keith residence is one of the most successful examples of the classic residential work of the prominent Kansas City architectural firm of Shepard, Farrar & Wiser. The imposing twenty-two room Georgian Revival style mansion, located in the once highly restricted Sunset Hill Subdivision in the famed Country Club District, was originally the home of Charles Keith, a lumber baron and president and general manager of the Central Coal & Coke Company. It later became the residence of J.C. Nichols, the eminent Kansas City real estate mogul and developer. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE: Hare and Hare, the nationally-recognized Kansas City landscape architecture firm, was responsible for the design of the three-acre home grounds which included formal gardens, a lily pool and vegetable plot. The firm's 1913 plan for Keith not only exemplifies the early private commissions of Hare and Hare, but also illustrates the firm's keen sense of incorporating a varied landscape design with traditional architecture. The period of significance is 1914, the date of construction

ELABORATION

The Keith Home and the Architectural Firm of Shepard, Farrar & Wiser

Designed in 1913 by the prominent firm of Shepard, Farrar & Wiser, the Charles S. Keith home is representative of the best of the firm's large-scale domestic architectural work in Kansas City. The Keith residence was planned during the most productive years of Shepard's multiple partnerships, which extended over a forty-five year period from 1887 to 1931. Throughout his distinguished career, Shepard was

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the principal designer of every building type found not only in Kansas City, but also in Tulsa, Wichita, and Amarillo, Texas. In the metropolitan area it is documented that Shepard left a rich tradition of architecture, including the design of over 600 residences located in Hyde Park, Mission Hills and the Country Club District.

Charles E. Shepard (1868-1932), was educated at the University of Iowa and was involved in the design of the state capitol at Des Moines prior to arriving in Kansas City in 1887. His first partnership with architect Martin Vrydagh produced, in Kansas City, the Warner Grand Opera House (1887, razed); the Independence Boulevard Methodist Episcopal Church (1889); and the Central Building (1889, destroyed by fire).¹

After Vrydagh left the firm in 1893 for Pittsburgh, Ernest H. Farrar entered into a partnership with Shepard that lasted through 1910. Works by Shepard and Farrar include the Loose Manufacturing Company Building (1902), the 12-room Jacobethan residence for G. A. Gurley (1908) and the Prairie style residence for J. J. Wolcott (1910). Albert Wiser, a former apprentice and draftsman for the firm, entered into partnership one year later. Even after Farrar was no longer associated with the firm, the partnership was known as Shepard, Farrar & Wiser from 1911-1918.

Some of the most refined and notable residential works by Shepard's firm were produced during this prolific, seven-year period, with many of the early commissions in the Hyde Park residential neighborhood. The Colonial Revival home at 3530 Charlotte Street (1912) and the Benjamin Berkshire residence

¹ In the mid-1890s, Vrydagh returned briefly to Kansas City when his new firm in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was commissioned to design the campus and main building of Kansas City University (1895-96) located in Kansas City, Kansas.

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(1911) are two of the more refined domestic examples. But it was the design for the Keith residence that undoubtedly helped to establish Shepard, Farrar & Wiser among the most sought after and respected architectural firms in Kansas City.

Keith's home, an interpretation of the Georgian Revival, exhibits the symmetrical massing and form of that widespread architectural style popularized by McKim, Mead and White in the mid-1880s. The use of elaborate cut-stone trim work throughout the exterior, the application of multiple pergolas, a porte cochere, and the addition of a substantial carriage house, set the house apart from their previous domestic designs. Additionally, the Kansas City landscape architectural firm of Hare and Hare were called upon to design the elaborate landscaping for the three-acre grounds. Keith's financial resources, of course, allowed both Shepard Farrar & Wiser and Hare and Hare the luxury of planning for such an opulent estate, however, the deed restrictions set forth by the J.C. Nichols Company partially guided the direction of the final design (see below). At the time, it was also one of the largest homes to be constructed in Kansas City.

From 1919 to 1926 the name of the firm changed to Shepard & Wiser, finally reflecting the absence of Farrar who had retired and moved to Maine in 1910. Wiser, the dynamic promoter of the pair, set up offices in Tulsa, Wichita and Amarillo and spearheaded several hotel commissions throughout the southwest. In 1927, Wiser left the firm to practice on his own.

Shepard's last partner in practice was Frederick C. Pickett who had drafted for the firm beginning in 1908. The partnership ended in 1931, one year before the death of Charles Shepard.

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The Landscape Architecture Firm of Hare and Hare

Sidney J. Hare formed a landscape architecture firm with his son, S. Herbert Hare in Kansas City, Missouri, when the practice of landscape architecture in America was still a fledgling profession. A native of Louisville, Kentucky, Sidney Hare (1860-1938) had no formal landscape training, but as a high school student, he studied horticulture, civil engineering, geology, surveying and photography. In Kansas City, from 1881-1896, Hare worked in the city engineer's office, where he was introduced to George E. Kessler. It was this relationship with Kessler, who was then a landscape architect for the city, which inspired Sid's interest in landscape design.

In 1896, Sid Hare resigned from his city job to become the superintendent of Forest Hill Cemetery in Kansas City. During his tenure, Hare gained a national reputation. In 1901, at a professional convention of cemetery superintendents, Hare discussed the cemetery as botanical garden, bird sanctuary and arboretum, probably the first on record in the design evolution of the modern cemetery.

In 1902, Sid established his own landscape architecture firm in Kansas City. Eight years later, the firm of Hare and Hare was formed when Sid's son, S. Herbert Hare (1888-1960), joined him in partnership. Born in Kansas City, S. Herbert Hare studied landscape planning at Harvard's School of Architecture from 1908-1910. With Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., as his principal instructor, Herbert was one of the first students in the United States to prepare formally for the profession of landscape architecture. Although he never received a degree from Harvard, Herbert had completed the course work required for a master's degree.

During the twenty-eight year association, Sid preferred to pursue

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park and cemetery projects, while his son mastered the details of community planning and design. Herbert was also working as a consultant to City Plan commissions throughout the Midwest.

In 1913, the firm attracted the attention of J.C. Nichols, who hired the Hares to work on the Country Club District in Kansas City. In addition to laying out approximately 2,500 acres, the firm designed the grounds for many of the homes including some of the five-acre estates that made of the original Mission Hills across the state line in Johnson County. Herbert was personally responsible for subdivision planning, for many of the detailed entrances and parks, and for creating appropriate setting for many of the imported objects d'art that Nichols placed throughout his developments.

For the Keith home, Hare and Hare's plan called for the placement of the Georgian style residence on the site, as well as the varied design of the surrounding grounds. It appears that there was more than one scheme for Keith, yet the plans essentially called for the same landscape elements developed at specific locations. An original feature that is no longer extant is the long, narrow pergola leading from the south end of the pool to the base of the terrace at the home's western edge. There is evidence that this elaborate element was constructed (see below). Furthermore, a geometric-styled lily pond, originally planned for the northwestern section of the grounds, may have been replaced by the current swimming pool.²

By 1925, Hare and Hare had completed projects in twenty-eight states. Projects for cemeteries, college campuses, subdivisions, parks and military housing were commissioned as well as urban master

² It is not clear whether or not the lily pond was constructed. Hare and Hare also designed a more functional pool for the site.

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plan studies. Just a few of the local outstanding projects include The Country Club District, the Country Club Plaza, and the grounds for the Nelson Atkins Museum of Art (formerly the Nelson-Atkins Gallery of Art). The firm also designed the master plan for Longview, Washington, and the campus plans for the University of Missouri-Kansas City and the University of Kansas. Ochsner, Hare and Hare, the successor firm to Hare and Hare formed in 1980, is located in Kansas City, Missouri.

The Development of the Sunset Hill Subdivision.

Located in Block 1, Lot 9 of the Sunset Hill subdivision of the Country Club District in Kansas City, the Charles S. Keith mansion was one of the earliest upper-class homes to be constructed in the "1,000 Acres Restricted" lands flanking Ward Parkway on 55th Street. J. C. Nichols, the land baron who eventually purchased the Keith mansion, developed the fashionable area where the "most notably discerning people . . . have chosen home sites . . ."³ Nichols sold a significant number of lots to Kansas City elite who wanted to reside in the exclusive area surrounded by distinctive homes.⁴

It was Nichols, teaming with the distinguished Kansas City landscape architect, George E. Kessler and local attorney Hugh Ward, who succeeded in planning a distinct residential community unlike any other residential neighborhood of Kansas City. As early as 1907 Nichols and Ward resolved to develop the first of the Sunset Hill subdivisions adjacent to the Kansas City Country Club grounds (now

³ As quoted in William S. Worley, *J.C. Nichols and the Shaping of Kansas City* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1990), 193.

⁴ Almost half of the total land in the 1,000 acres was restricted to homesites for the upper class of Kansas City.

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Loose Park).⁵ Ward had inherited from his pioneering father, banker Seth Ward, more than 400 acres of land then outside the city limits of Kansas City between Broadway (now Wornall Road), State Line, 51st and 59th Streets. The alliance between Nichols and Ward brought the duo into contact with Kessler, the father of Kansas City's parks and boulevard system and landscape architect for the initial Sunset Hill area. Due to the imagination of Nichols, the brilliance of Kessler, and the backing and resources of Ward, the Sunset Hill subdivision within the Country Club District became one of Kansas City's most exclusive residential neighborhoods.

After the development of the first Sunset Hill area in 1908, the Nichols Company continued to acquire and plat Ward's property west of Sunset Drive to the State Line as the expanded Sunset Hill subdivision.⁶ In 1909, the Nichols Company established a syndicate that included Ward and members of Nichols staff; the newly formed company, the J.C. Nichols Investment Company, was incorporated in early 1910. The company's land acquisitions allowed Nichols to "employ planning practices on a large scale, where lot size included . . . large plots of 200 feet or more. Offering these larger lots plus the added advantage of twenty-five year deed restrictions, community planning, and the growing Nichols reputation, the J. C. Nichols Company was able to

⁵ In 1896, the Kansas City Country Club had leased Seth Ward's pasture to lay out a new golf course. In 1926, after the club had built 18 holes the Ward heirs reclaimed the back nine for residential development and Mrs. Jacob Loose bought the front nine to donate to the city as a park. The official plat of the initial Sunset Hill subdivision was filed on August 12, 1909, and included the area bounded by Broadway (now Wornall Road), Sunset Drive, 55th through 56th Streets. However, the area was developed as early as 1908.

⁶ Today, 51st and 59th Streets, Wornall and State Line Road, the location of Seth Ward's land holdings, bound the Sunset Hill subdivision.

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attract to the Sunset Hills area some of the wealthiest people of Kansas City.”⁷

The centerpiece of the Sunset Hill area is Ward Parkway, the dual boulevard designed by Kessler that stretches past Seth Ward’s original land holdings through the exclusive subdivision. According to historian William Worley, “An early J.C. Nichols advertisement noted that “the plaza treatment of Ward Parkway south of . . . Fifty-fifth Street lends an air of distinction to the individual homes which front the streets radiating from it. The advertisement makes it clear that Nichols viewed Ward Parkway primarily as an attraction to raise values along the intersecting streets even more than he expected the roadway to have large numbers of high-value residences lining its path.”⁸

The charm and social climate of the initial Sunset Hill subdivision, touted by lavish advertisements in the *Kansas City Star* and *Times* that plugged the names of property owners and featured their imposing residential plans, attracted prominent individuals such as Mack B. Nelson, Bernard Corrigan and Charles S. Keith. Nelson and Corrigan built their homes in 1912 and 1914, respectively, while the Keith home was the third residence to be built along 55th Street, west of Ward Parkway. Even before it was completed, Keith’s new home, designed by

⁷ Gary O'Dell Anderson Molyneaux, “Planned Land Use Change in an Urban Setting: The J.C. Nichols Company and the Country Club District of Kansas City.” Ph.D. Thesis, University of Illinois at Urban-Champaign, 1979, 69. The lengthy deed restrictions, also known as restrictive covenants were filed with the plats of Sunset Hill. They included restrictions on use of land, frontage of lots and residences, cost of residences, free space and types of outbuildings, and “that none of said lots shall be conveyed to, used, owned nor occupied by negroes as owners or tenants.” Later restrictions also included “selling Jews.” Curiously, the restrictions enumerated on the plat were to be “continued and binding upon the Ward Investment Company and those persons subscribed below” including J.C. and Jessie Nichols.

⁸ William Worley, “Ward Parkway,” In *The Grand American Avenue, 1850-1920*, Jan Cigliano and Sarah Bradford Landau, eds. (San Francisco: Pomegranate Artbooks, 1994), 288.

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Shepard, Farrar & Wiser, received publicity in *The Kansas City Star*, November 2, 1913. Purportedly, Keith was never comfortable in his palatial residence; consequently he sold it to J. C. Nichols in 1920. Nichols lived at this address until his death in 1950.

Charles S. Keith

Born in Kansas City on January 28, 1873, Charles S. Keith was the son of Richard Henry and Anna J. (Boarman) Keith. The older Keith was the founder of the Keith & Perry Company that later expanded into the Central Coal & Coke Company, operating in eight states. Charles received a B. S. degree from Fordham University in 1891 (at the age of eighteen) and on his return to Kansas City, entered into his father's employ. During his early years with the company, Charles was assigned to work in mines located in Missouri and Kansas where he studied mining and engineering. Subsequently, Charles got involved in the company's lumber trade and in 1903, he was elected Vice President. Following the death of his father's successor, W.C. Perry, in 1907, Keith became President and General Manager of the Central Coal & Coke Company.

After the company sank into a receivership in 1931, Keith never resumed activity in the coal or lumber trade. However, in 1940, he gained public notoriety when he accepted the position of mayor of Kansas City for the three months interim between Bryce B. Smith's resignation from city hall and the inauguration of Mayor Gage in April 1940.

Additionally, Keith was a director of the Kansas City Power and Light Company, Fidelity National Bank and Trust Company and the Fidelity Savings Trust Company. Keith was also a director of the National Lumber Manufacturers Association, Washington, D.C., and the president of the influential Southern Pine Association. Following the

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death of his first wife, Jane Ormsby Gregg in 1897, Keith married Lucille Hill in 1900. They had two sons, Richard William and Charles S., Jr. Keith passed away on October 9, 1945.

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Verbal Boundary Description

Block 1, all of Lot 9, Sunset Hill Subdivision, Kansas City, Jackson County, Missouri.

Boundary Justification

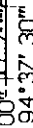
The nominated property includes the entire parcel historically associated with the Charles S. Keith Residence

Photographs

(Photographer: Cydney E. Millstein, Kansas City, Missouri. All negatives are the property of Architectural and Historical Research, L.L.C., Kansas City, Missouri.) July 1999.

1. Main or south façade; view looking north
2. Main or south façade; view looking northwest
3. Detail of main façade; view looking north
4. Detail of main façade; view looking east, northeast
5. Detail of main façade; view looking west, northwest
6. West façade; view looking east
7. West and north façades; view looking southeast
8. North or rear façade; view looking south
9. East and rear façades; view looking southwest
10. The living room; view looking east, southeast
11. The Palm room; view looking northwest
12. The dining room; view looking north
13. The carriage house, main or west facade; view looking northeast.
14. The carriage house, main and north façades; view looking southeast
15. The front lawn, view looking southwest
16. The formal garden; view looking northwest
17. Detail of the formal garden and pergola; view looking northeast

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